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Security Council

Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3732nd Meeting

Monday, 20 January 1997, 5 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Owada	(Japan)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Costa Rica	Mr. Naranjo
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Hume

Agenda

Central America: efforts towards peace

Report of the Secretary-General (S/1996/1045 and Add.1 and 2)

97-85040 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 5.10 p.m.

Welcome to a Foreign Minister

The President: I should like, at the outset of the meeting, to acknowledge the presence at the Council table of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, His Excellency Mr. Fernando Naranjo. On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to him.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central America: efforts towards peace

Report of the Secretary-General (S/1996/1045 and Add.1 and 2)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Guatemala, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Martini Herrera (Guatemala) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on Central America: efforts towards peace, documents S/1996/1045 and Add.1 and 2.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1997/49, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1997/23, which contains the text of a letter dated 10 January 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the text of a letter of the same date from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Members of the Council have received photocopies of a letter dated 16 January 1997 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the texts of two agreements pertaining to the Guatemala peace process, which were signed by the Peace Commission of the Government of Guatemala and the General Command of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca under the auspices of the United Nations in December 1996, which will be issued as document S/1997/51.

Members of the Council have also received photocopies of a letter dated 20 January 1997 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the position paper of the Chinese Government on the authorization of the deployment of military observers in Guatemala by the Security Council, which will be issued as document S/1997/53.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, His Excellency Mr. Fernando Naranjo.

Mr. Naranjo (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Government of Costa Rica, in its capacity as spokesman and Secretary *pro tempore* of the Central American Presidential Summits, is profoundly pleased by the decision being taken today in the Security Council.

The signing of the peace agreements in Guatemala on 29 December 1996 was the culmination of a difficult peacemaking process in the region of more than a decade. It is with great joy that we in Central America are celebrating this historic event. There is peace in Nicaragua, there is peace in El Salvador, and now, after 36 years, Guatemala, our dear sister country, is also achieving peace.

Today Central America, in peace and freedom, and deeply committed to respect for human rights and for the environment, is preparing to meet the challenges of the future in the framework of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America. This unique experience unites the seven small countries of our isthmus more than ever.

All Central Americans are profoundly grateful to all members of the Council for the decision that is being taken this afternoon, which will make it possible for a United Nations contingent to verify compliance with the peace agreements in Guatemala. We are especially grateful to you, Mr. President, and to you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your endeavours to achieve a satisfactory agreement. We express our respect and appreciation to China for its support for this decision, which is crucial for the completion of the process of peacemaking and democratization in Central America. We again offer our appreciation and thanks to the countries of the Group of Friends of Guatemala, which have helped and cooperated so much in this process. And to the people and the Government of Guatemala in particular, we offer our sincerest congratulations.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): We voted against the draft resolution on sending military observers to Guatemala when it was considered by the Council on 10 January 1997. We made it clear then that that was not a situation that we wanted to see. The causes of the situation were clearly set out in the statement that I made on that occasion, and I shall not repeat them here today.

The Chinese Government has consistently supported the peace process in Guatemala and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. We welcome and are gratified by the peace agreement reached by the two parties in Guatemala. We are in favour of the peace process in Guatemala, monitored by and under the auspices of the United Nations, and sincerely hope that peace and stability will prevail in the country. Therefore, we have always kept the door wide open to an appropriate solution of the issue and have hoped to find such a solution through consultations.

It is in this spirit of sincerity that we have had many rounds of fruitful consultations with Guatemala over the past 10 days. The two sides, guided by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and through a forward-looking, pragmatic approach, have finally found a solution acceptable to both sides, thereby removing the obstacles to China's support for the draft resolution before us. We view Guatemala's constructive move positively.

Here we wish to express our appreciation to the President and other members of the Council, the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process, the non-aligned and all other countries concerned about the Guatemalan peace process for their understanding and support.

We sincerely hope that the peace process in Guatemala will ultimately succeed, allowing Guatemala to enjoy true peace and stability, create an environment conducive to its future economic reconstruction and embark on the road of healthy development. We also hope that the basis for cooperation between China and Guatemala in the United Nations will thus be further strengthened, thereby creating favourable conditions for the future development of relations between our two countries.

The President: I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to me.

I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1997/49.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Kenya, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1094 (1997).

The Secretary-General wishes to make a statement. I now call on him to do so.

The Secretary-General: I have been most gratified to learn that the obstacles that stood in the way of the Security Council's being able to authorize deployment of a group of United Nations military observers to verify compliance with the agreement on the definitive ceasefire in Guatemala have been overcome.

In recent weeks, the Secretariat has undertaken intensive consultations on this matter with the parties concerned and encouraged them to find the common ground that would allow passage of this resolution to go forward. I therefore welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to the constructive approach demonstrated by the Member States most directly involved and the efforts of the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan Peace Process in their support. The adoption by the Security Council of the resolution before it will allow for the effective verification of one of the most crucial elements of Guatemala's transition to peace and reconciliation.

The United Nations has been involved in the Guatemalan process since it was first asked to provide an observer to the peace talks in 1990. Since 1994 it has played a particularly active role, both through moderation of the peace negotiations and in the deployment of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala. The signing of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace in Guatemala City on 29 December 1996 opens a new chapter in the United Nations responsibilities. As we prepare for the overall verification contemplated by the various accords, I am pleased to acknowledge the support of the Security Council and Member States at large for what we all hope will become recognized as one of the Organization's success stories.

The President: The representative of Guatemala has asked to speak, and I now call on him.

Mr. Martini Herrera (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish simply to express briefly my delegation's satisfaction that this moment of historic importance for Guatemala has come under your presidency, Sir, and in the presence of the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica and the Secretary-General, and that the Security Council has fulfilled its weighty peacekeeping responsibilities so commendably and to the great benefit of my country.

I need not repeat the ideas put forward in the excellent statements in support of the draft resolution considered at the Council's first meeting of the year, but I should like once again to express our gratitude for them. I assure members that the considerations put forward in those statements are sufficient grounds for the great satisfaction felt at this moment by the people and the Government of Guatemala, as we see that the obstacles that made it impossible for the necessary measures to be taken to pursue the peace process with United Nations participation have been overcome.

Therefore, on behalf of my people and Government, I have the pleasure to convey our satisfaction and profound gratitude through you, Mr. President, to each and every member of the Security Council — and in particular to one whose understanding has earned our special thanks — as well as to the Secretariat and all the countries that have striven towards this moment, for the critical contribution that the Council has just made to the normalization of the living conditions and to the well-being of the long-suffering people of Guatemala, who deserve a better fate than that which the persistence of the sterile domestic conflict and its attendant suffering seemed to hold in store.

The President: There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.